



...from the Peri-Urban Regions Platform Europe conference (12 November, 2009)  
***Europe's peri-urban potential: beyond urban-rural links***

**The environmental, territorial and agricultural specificities of Europe's important peri-urban zones must be taken into account. Policy makers in all these areas, and at all levels of governance, need to acknowledge that developing EU policies solely according to 'urban' and 'rural' categorisations is no longer appropriate. The key messages of the conference are:**

**...When looking at peri-urban territorial development...**

- EU and national government policies need to acknowledge the role of regional and local government in effective delivery of complex measures which often need to be locally tailored.
- The territorial characteristics of peri-urban regions – in particular open space and distinctive landscapes – are of vital importance. There is a need for common agreements to protect them by all who live there.
- Policy makers need the right data at the right level, including the peri-urban level, to assess need and direct financial and other resources.
- In order to respond to the new challenges (...globalisation, climate and demographic change...) new territorial governance is needed, including a new dialogue between cities and adjacent peri-urban areas. Peri-urban regions can help turn the challenges into opportunities.
- Future EU regional policy should have a clearer focus on the specific needs of peri-urban regions in order to support them in fulfilling their potential and achieving sustainable development, as well as contributing to European objectives.

**...When looking at peri-urban food production...**

- Europe can benefit economically, environmentally and socially from 'eating peri-urban'. 'Local for local' food production helps the regional economy, is low on carbon footprint and food miles – and thus is good for the climate. It also helps maintain landscape and open space.
- Europe is in a strategic agricultural position and peri-urban regions have a major contribution to make in fulfilling potential and exploiting new opportunities, in particular in ensuring a more sustainable balance between 'global' and 'local'.
- Future food security, new products and varieties, cradle to cradle systems, stewardship of agricultural land and open space for long term sustainability are just some of the important areas for further research and exchanges of best practice between peri-urban regions.
- Peri-urban regions, close to growing urban populations, are where EU policy can bring consumers back in touch with the reality of how food is made and how important the natural environment is to all citizens
- The peri-urban dimension cannot be ignored in any future CAP, in order to ensure peri-urban regions continue to feed and support the health and wellbeing of Europe's citizens.

**...When looking at climate change adaptation and mitigation and managing the environment...**

- Development of adaptation and mitigation strategies should help stimulate more integrated policy making in peri-urban regions.
- There is great potential for investment in low carbon technology, because of the wide diversity of economic activities in peri-urban regions and we need to find new ways of involving the public and private sectors in such investment.
- Engaging all citizens in monitoring energy use and emissions and will help signpost lifestyle and behaviour choices that support the long term sustainability of peri-urban regions.
- Peri-urban regions need to collect more data to enable them to quantify and compare trends, and evaluate the impact of adaptation and mitigation.
- The ecosystems of peri-urban regions are under pressure, and future policies will need to take into account the particular threats relating to peri-urban biodiversity, soil quality, water resources, air quality etc. so that important and multi-functional landscapes are protected, and long term stewardship of environmental resources is assured.

**Conference's presentations and speeches available on the PURPLE web site: [www.purple-eu.org](http://www.purple-eu.org)**

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